



The Amesbury Beat

By: Officer Tom Hanshaw

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In New England, residents know the season of winter is probably far from over, despite what the groundhog predicts tomorrow. We've actually had a fairly easy winter thus far but I thought I would include a couple reminders in this week's column, just in case Mother Nature throws another snowball or two our way. Historically, the first couple weeks of February can produce big storms so keep the shovels handy. The good news is that Red Sox pitchers and catchers report to spring training in a few days so the warmer weather isn't too far away.

I can't stress the importance of completely removing snow and ice from your vehicle before hitting the road. It seems we hear an account after every storm of falling ice striking the windshield of a car. Motorists should also assure the windshield is clear, don't rely on the defroster to do the entire job. The angle of the morning sun's rays can be blinding and an icy windshield will make it more difficult for a driver to see. The roads can also be narrow, so slow down and be prepared to pull to the right if necessary, to avoid clanking mirrors. Remember, a wet roadway can turn into an icy one without warning so be prepared for changing conditions. In poor weather, you have enough to concentrate on so avoid any distractions.

This week I travel back to the year, 2015 in the community policing scrapbook. We are fortunate to work with a number of partners to make our city a safer and better place; no police agency can do the job alone. I found stories about some hefty snowstorms in February, extensive road work in the area and a new director for the Chamber of Commerce, Kassandra Gove. The biggest story to pick was an easy one, both personally and professionally. Since 2003, volunteers had sponsored The Relay for Life of Amesbury to support the work of The American Cancer Society. Cancer was something too many of us were familiar with, seeing friends, family and community members fight the disease. At the Station, we saw firsthand that cancer didn't care who you were as Lt. Bailey's young son was diagnosed earlier in the year. Thankfully he is doing very well today, fighting cancer and winning.





After 13 years of various fundraisers, big events and a lot of work, we reached the one-million-dollar mark of donations. Volunteers represented all parts of the community, celebrated the achievements of survivors, remembered those who fought and lost their battle with cancer and truly made a difference. We had a team at the police department each year and I was also able to be a part of the committee, helping to organize the Relay and coordinate events. My fondest memory was when I was approached by a teacher in Amesbury, who had a very tough fight with cancer and won. With a brilliant smile on her face, she came over and could not stop saying thank you.

She went on to explain the treatment she received had been developed with the help of money provided by the American Cancer Society, which came from the Relay For Life. Some of the money we raised in the early years of the effort, helped save her life. Her remarks made us feel like we had in fact made a difference and inspired us to continue our efforts. Over the years, we saw many sad stories, learned of so many struggles and lost some dear friends but hearing her words said we could win. One day cancer will be history and we pray that day comes soon but there's still a long way to go so must keep up the fight.

